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R 041641Z APR 07  
FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4483  
RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1669  
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL  
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J5 MIAMI FL  
RUEHCV/USDAO CARACAS VE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BRIDGETOWN 000399

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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DEPARTMENT FOR WHA/CAR, F, PM  
SOUTHCOM FOR J5/SA  
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: ASEC MARR PGOV PINR PREL SNAR BB ST VC XL  
SUBJECT: REQUEST TO REPROGRAM FMF FUNDS IN FY 08

REF: BRIDGETOWN 397

THIS CABLE IS SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. PLEASE PROTECT  
ACCORDINGLY.

SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST

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¶1. (U) This is an action request. See paras 11 and 12.

¶2. (U) Embassy Bridgetown has registered in reftel its concerns regarding the State Department's decision to eliminate FY 08 Foreign Military Financing (FMF) for the Eastern Caribbean. While we strongly urge the Department to reverse this decision and restore FMF funding for the Eastern Caribbean, we propose as a stopgap measure to reprogram FMF funds in the Barbados and St. Vincent/Grenadines FMF accounts held in abeyance since these countries fell under American Service-Members' Protection Act (ASPA) sanctions in July 2003. Post requests the Department's approval for these funds to be utilized to fill the potential FMF gap in FY 08, specifically to fund the Eastern Caribbean Technical Assistance Field Team (TAFT).

BACKGROUND

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¶3. (U) The TAFT was born of the necessity to help the Eastern Caribbean countries develop a maritime security capability in the aftermath of the upheaval in Grenada in 1983, and subsequent events throughout the region in the mid-1980's. Since then, overall USG support has included the transfer of Excess Defense Article (EDA) patrol boats; training through Joint Combined Education and Training (JCETs), Mobile Training Teams (MTTs), International Military Education and Training (IMET), and other sources; and annual block grants of FMF executed by the TAFT for the Regional Security System (RSS) member-states. In its capacity, the TAFT supports non-sanctioned RSS maritime units on all engineering-related requirements, including vessel/base assessments, technical consulting on readiness and engineering casualties, and the procurement of items and services to improve performance.

¶4. (U) TAFT personnel also conduct site visits and inspections, develop dry dock work lists and contracts, evaluate shipboard equipment and machinery, perform component failure analysis, and do the necessary market research for repairs and parts replacement. In FY 06, using a USD 100,000 contracting warrant and two Government Purchase Cards (GPC) accounts, TAFT accomplished the following:

-- Awarded 392 contracts totaling USD 743,379.62;

-- Executed 81 purchases via GPC totaling USD 47,963.63;

-- Wrote the statements of work, solicited, awarded, and executed 4 dry-dock contracts totaling USD 342,987.96, to include on-site quality assurance of work standards at the dry dock facility;

-- Managed 24 FMF lines of accounting totaling USD 3,968,319.05;

-- Processed 302 Shipping & Customs clearances.

These actions along with the functions listed above required the full-time employment of the one officer and two petty officers that comprise the TAFT.

15. (U) TAFT functions have progressed from hands-on maintenance actions in the early years to filling the gap in program management capabilities, which are lacking in the Eastern Caribbean microstates. TAFT manages and executes RSS countries' FMF that is designated for support of maritime forces via Military Interdepartmental Purchase Requests (MIPRs) issued by the Navy International Programs Office (NIPO) from the countries' respective Letters of Offer and Acceptance (LOA).

16. (U) The TAFT is completely funded via annual Security Assistance appropriations. U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters (USCG/G-CI) requires that manpower costs be reimbursed in the FY for which services are rendered, preferably in advance or as early in the FY as possible. In lieu of the pending FMF cut-off in FY 08, G-CI has mandated that we execute the FY 08 transfer at the end of FY 07.

TAFT CRITICAL TO U.S. INTERESTS

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17. (SBU) TAFT functions as a direct link between Embassy Bridgetown's Military Liaison Office (MLO) and the coast guards in the Eastern Caribbean countries. As such, they conduct their activities in direct support of the Embassy's Mission Strategic Plan Goal 2: Combating International Crime and Drugs; Goal 3: Bolstering Counterterrorism Efforts; and Goal 4: Responding to Emergencies with Humanitarian Assistance.

18. (SBU) These goals are in concert with USSOUTHERN COMMAND's Theater Strategic Cooperation Plan objectives of providing regional capabilities for Counterterrorism, Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction, Stabilization Operations and Security Sector Reform, Counternarcotics, and Transnational Crime. TAFT also provides advice on operational, manpower, diplomatic, and administrative issues to the Eastern Caribbean coast guards, MLO, USSOUTHERN COMMAND (SOUTHCOM), and other entities. TAFT is the technical expert for all of SOUTHCOM's Tradewinds Exercise planning that incorporates afloat assets of the RSS countries into exercise scenarios. They conduct post-exercise evaluations and submit lessons learned to SOUTHCOM. TAFT is SOUTHCOM's primary engagement tool for maritime issues in the Eastern Caribbean, as well as the primary vehicle for end use monitoring (EUM) for assets remitted to the Eastern Caribbean countries.

19. (U) RSS coast guards have also proved their importance during the Cricket World Cup, the third largest sporting event in the world, which is currently underway in the Caribbean. Their patrol vessels have been employed at various locations for security at Cricket World Cup games. Two of these patrol vessels, one from St. Kitts/Nevis and one from Antigua/Barbuda, recently provided escort service for Ambassador Ourisman's 20-minute ride on a contracted ferry to the USS CARNEY, which was anchored in the port at St. Johns, Antigua. These actions were only possible due to the seaworthy condition of the vessels and the training of their crews, thanks in large part to TAFT's efforts and success at performing its functions. Many of the region's patrol vessels are approaching or are already beyond their design service lives. The prospective termination of the TAFT could not therefore come at a more inopportune time.

RECOMMENDATION AND ACTION REQUEST

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**¶10.** (U) Embassy Bridgetown and SOUTHCOM are in agreement that the TAFT should not be disbanded. However, the elimination of FMF funding for the Eastern Caribbean in FY 08 will mean exactly that--the end of TAFT. It is highly unlikely that the TAFT could be reinstated if and when FMF is reactivated for the Eastern Caribbean.

In light of this bleak scenario, Embassy Bridgetown strongly urges the Department to reinstate FY 08 FMF funding for the Eastern Caribbean, so that the TAFT can continue its mission, which is vital to the survival and growth of the Eastern Caribbean maritime security units.

**¶11.** (U) While the Department considers this request, the Embassy is also proposing to secure TAFT's continued operations by reprogramming FMF funds in the Barbados and St. Vincent/Grenadines FMF accounts held in abeyance since these countries fell under ASPA sanctions in July 2003. Both countries are party to the Rome Statute that created the International Criminal Court, and both have consistently--and vocally--opposed signing Article 98 agreements with the United States. It is the Embassy's view that Barbados and St. Vincent/Grenadines will not sign Article 98 agreements in the near future. Consequently, the Embassy proposes to reprogram the balance in the Barbados FMF account (\$254,731.71) and the balance in the St. Vincent/Grenadines FMF account (\$282,873.91) to St. Lucia for the purpose of providing support to the Eastern Caribbean TAFT. Additionally, the Embassy requests that the balance in FMF cases BB-P-RAL and VC-P-RAL also be reprogrammed to St. Lucia. The Embassy requests that these funds be transferred as expeditiously as possible to sustain the TAFT through FY 08.

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